

Muntham House School

Barns Green, Horsham, West Sussex RH13 0NJ

Residential provision inspected under the social care common inspection framework

Information about this residential special school

Muntham House School is a special school that provides boarding and day provision for boys aged five to 18 years. There are currently 114 students on the school roll. There were 23 students boarding at the time of the inspection.

The inspector only inspected the social care provision at this school.

Inspection dates: 23 January and 6 and 7 February 2024

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| Overall experiences and progress of children and young people, taking into account | outstanding |
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| How well children and young people are helped and protected | outstanding |
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| The effectiveness of leaders and managers | outstanding |
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The residential special school provides highly effective services that consistently exceed the standards of good. The actions of the school contribute to significantly improved outcomes and positive experiences for children and young people.

Date of previous inspection: 21 March 2023

Overall judgement at last inspection: outstanding

Inspection judgements

Overall experiences and progress of children and young people: outstanding

Children make exceptional progress in the residential provision. They enjoy positive relationships with staff, who take the time to help the children to try new things, learn to relax or play games.

Children are enthusiastic when they talk about staying at the residential provision and enjoy the opportunities and experiences that they have. Children feel listened to and know that staff, including senior staff, are interested in their ideas. Changes are made in response to consultation with the children.

Parents and carers are highly positive about the residential provision. One said their son had a 'school mum' and that staff 'treat the boys like their own children'. They feel they are kept up to date with their child's progress and are well informed about their child. Parents are confident that the school teaches children how to manage in social situations, and that staff provide high standards of care that are individualised for each child.

Children enjoy a wide range of new and challenging activities in the residential provision. Children are given the confidence to attend groups in the community, such as cadets, youth clubs and the gym. Children are given the opportunity to travel independently and meet with friends or go out in the local community. One child said that they would never have learned to play the guitar if they had not attended the residential provision. Several children are excited and proud about the Duke of Edinburgh's Award they are undertaking. Their confidence has developed due to the support and encouragement from staff.

Children learn about healthy lifestyles and what this means for them. Children eat healthy meals and staff help them with the food choices they make. The use of an extensive range of therapies and the mini farm on site provide an invaluable service for children and others from local schools. When needed, school rules have been adapted to allow for a personalised approach to support children's emotional well-being needs.

How well children and young people are helped and protected: outstanding

Children are confident in the residential provision and can identify preferred staff they can go to if they are worried or upset. Staff have an excellent understanding of each child's risks and vulnerabilities. Staff know the procedures to follow should they be concerned for a child's welfare, including how to escalate concerns outside of the provision should this be required.

Staff know the children well and quickly identify any changes in children's behaviour that may indicate they are struggling. Staff encourage positive behaviour and raise any concerns with children. This is done in a warm and nurturing manner, meaning that children understand the issue and do not feel belittled by the interaction.

Staff help children to explore their thoughts and views following any incidents. Children have developed their emotional vocabulary with the support of staff and the therapy team. Children are now increasingly more aware of their feelings, leading to greater insight for the children and how staff can support them in the future.

On a small number of occasions, the language recorded in incident records is not child-focused. However, the impact is minimal due to staff's genuine approach of being child-centred and applying trauma-informed practice.

The school is open and respectful of children who are exploring their gender and identity. Children have personalised support, such as attending specialist hair salons and being provided with gender neutral clothing. Additionally, the school's LGBTQ+ group allows children to explore who they are in a safe space.

Parents say that bullying is dealt with well, including incidents that happen through online games or social media. Children do not say bullying is an issue in the school, but all know they can go to staff if there is a friendship or relationship issue.

The effectiveness of leaders and managers: outstanding

Leaders and managers are highly aspirational for all the children in their care. Leaders continually strive to develop all aspects of the school and the experiences of children. The residential provision is highly effective at helping children to develop confidence and social skills.

Children are held central to the planning of the provision and are involved through the school council to share their views and ideas for future development. Regular monitoring of the residential provision and reports provided by the independent person further support development and change.

Monitoring children's progress is a particular strength of the school. Children's plans are regularly updated in line with any developments and changes to their needs. Regular meetings with key staff mean that targets are monitored and adapted as children progress. All progress is celebrated, no matter how small. All staff come together daily to allow for these successes to be shared with the group. Children are rightly proud when their name is mentioned.

Staff are well supported by the managers in the school. Staff say they feel valued; they can talk to the senior staff and feel their views are considered and listened to. Staff benefit from regular supervision and a comprehensive training schedule. Staff have the skills they need to meet the needs of the children and can request

additional training in areas of interest or that will enable them to provide further support to children.

What does the residential special school need to do to improve?

Point for improvement

- School leaders should ensure that records consistently contain child-centred language.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors have looked closely at the experiences and progress of children and young people using the social care common inspection framework. This inspection was carried out under the Children Act 1989 to assess the effectiveness of the service, how it meets the core functions of the service as set out in legislation, and to consider how well it complies with the national minimum standards.

Residential special school details

Social care unique reference number: SC014636

Headteacher/teacher in charge: Harry Anderson

Type of school: Residential special school

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Inspector

Jennie Christopher, Social Care Inspector

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